Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, I beg to move :

That the Bill be passed.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

The Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we shall take up the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, I beg to move:

> "That the Bill further to amend the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration".

Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, through you, I am to inform that, strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India, from time to time, every Government of the day has to bring Ordinances, which they feel very important and necessary, and, then, they convert them into legislations. Accordingly, we have done it. The legislation had already been passed in the Lok Sabha yesterday.

I am to inform the House that the Prasar Bharati is not a Prasar Bharati of 1990. It is meeting challenges, problems faced in the commercial media and the public service obligation media, called, the Prasar Bharati. To meet the challenges, the Prasar Bharati Board should have teeth, should have strength, and should have dynamism. But the dynamism does not simply mean a slogan or a speech. It must have a capacity in a manner that new concept, new ideas and new spirit is imbibed in the highest office, though it has a part-time Chairman. And, also, the professional motivation of the management's character is built up. Till now, the process was that only the bureaucracy would come in as the CEO of the Prasar Bharati, or some chosen member would head the Prasar Bharati Board as a part-time member, not as a full time because as per law he has to be a part-time. Sir, we are the host broadcaster of the Commonwealth Games, 2010, and the Youth Commonwealth Games, 2008, right knocking at the door in June. And, being as a host broadcaster, we also feel that we have to interact with the international media and they also want decisions from time to time. And, decisions are not taken by the Government, the decisions are taken by the Board. The Board had to meet often, time and again. Therefore, we felt to first look at the Act. And, we felt that there are two problems. One, there is a provision for the Chairman, whose age is not fixed. He can be 90, or, he can be 99, or, he can be 100. He can retire anytime. The second problem that we felt was that when we would talk with any professional people to come, these days, throughout the world, right from the BBC, Voice of America, even the Yemen television, and the private television and the Public Service Obligation Television in Australia, the competent professionals would not come if he did not feel that he had enough time for a stable period to continue and deliver. So, on these two aspects, we thought of fixing the tenure of the Chairman, with a part-time, not a salaried man, only to preside over the meetings and draw some allowances. And, a professional man, who is the Executive Member, full time, who is

the CEO, should be someone who has time to deliver and contribute substantially, not beyond 65, because when I had been in seminars held in Germany with the international media personnel and the television experts, they also said how could a 59-60 years' person—*they consider a sixty-year-man as quite a young man—deliver in a commercial net or a* private net in public service obligation with administrative experience, who is stable for five years? I found that we fixed it as 62. Therefore, we have brought in only two changes—one, there should be a fixed tenure of the Chairman; second, with regard to age, that is, there should be nobody beyond 70. I can take someone who can join at 67, finish at 70; we can take someone who is 60, finish at 63, and, again, he can be chosen or not for 3 years. So, the tenure for the Chairman will be brought down to three years. Sir, the urgency was felt on three counts. Count one; our Group of Ministers is examining the entire interest of the workers because Doordarshan workers; the Prasar Bharati workers, I must confess we have been facing unexplainable problems from day one of 1990. Neither have they been given the status of belonging to the Government, nor, the Prasar Bharat cadre or Prasar Bharati institution, which you all call, autonomous, could build up resources in a profit making manner which can back up their required support. So, there were constant conflicts. And the House will agree that the law which was passed in 1990 came into effect only in 1997. For about 5-7 years, it could not come into effect because of many other issues. I do not want to elaborate much on that. Sir, from 1997 onwards, the day it was enacted on 15.9 1997, within ten days, we had to bring an Ordinance. It was an Ordinance changing lock, stock and barrel many other provisions of the Act. And that Ordinance got lapsed. Again, another Ordinance came and that also got lapsed Again, another ordinance was repromulgated during the time of Shri I.K. Gujral when he was the Prime Minister. Again, that totally abolished the age-limit of the CEO. The CEO's age-limit was closed. He could be a 74-year old-man, he may be 90-year or 88 year old. And, again, it lapsed. Then, the Attorney-General advised that you restore the old position. Again, it was brought to the old position. Like this, they were in doldrums. so, we, consciously, thought this and, the Group of Ministers also got the recommendation of the Standing Committee that the Prasar Bharati needs the following four things. One, restructuring of the entire Prasar Bharati with a motive that employees' interest, commercial interest and public service interest is protected. Second, was to give them a little professional management type of things in all the matters. And, third, Sir, which is most important, is that it had to compete with the private channels which are not accountable to the nation every time in all public service matters, but, 'yes', they have their business motive and they have profiteering motive. And, to moot that, you need a professional dynamism inside the whole management of the Prasar Bharati. Sir, to do that, we need a comprehensive restructuring in terms of financial arrangement, in terms of employees status and in terms of casual people, who have been serving for 15-20-30 years. Some of them retire and they shed tears before me. I feel very sad for them whenever I visit some station. Therefore, Sir, we address this issue in the Group of Ministers. I am having a meeting with the Finance Minister this week for discussing the total restructuring of the financial interest which will be involved for supporting the employees. They will be treated as Government employees. Now, they are deemed to be on deputation. I do not know whether they will be covered in the Sixth Pay Commission or not. I am very hopeful that they will be covered by the Sixth Pay Commission. Many other associations also met me. We are going to have the last meeting of the GoM before 1st April. When the final report comes, I will take it to the Cabinet and come back to the House again. But this particular amendment was necessitated because we decided that we will change it in three parts. Part one: the top management, part two, the middle management; the Board itself, and part three, dividing the

Prasar Bharati into three chapters. Chapter one will be the Marketing Wing; which must be professionally - oriented in strength. Chapter two will be the Programme Wing. We have to see the appetite of the people in India and abroad in terms of India's culture, India's tradition, India's value system etc. To combat and to frustrate other kinds of things, we take recourse to the Cable Network Regulation Act. The third, Sir, is the administrative apparatus of the Prasar Bharati. So, the top part in the Chairman and the CEO. Second and third part, be will come back when the complete restructuring will be addressed by the GoM in the final meeting. It was necessary. Sir, I am telling you that it is not fair. We are facing a challenge. Within three months, we are going to host a sports programme where 70 nations are going to participate and that sports programme is to be managed by the host broadcaster, the Prasar Bharati. The youth games are going to be held just in August. Sir, 2010 is also knocking at the door. If your slot structure pattern is not started, I do not know when the decision will emerge from the Board. We have to complete the entire Board formation by another month. We need only one or two vacancies to be settled after this Ordinance, which has been converted into law in Lok Sabha yesterday and passed, is taken care of.

Sir, with these words, I commend the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008, for approval by this august House.

The question was proposed.

श्री कलराज मिश्र (उत्तर प्रदेश): माननीय उपसभापति जी, प्रसार भारती (भारतीय प्रसारण निगम) संशोधन विधेयक, 2008 अभी माननीय मंत्री जी ने यहां पर प्रस्तुत किया है। माननीय मंत्री जी ने अपने उद्बोधन में कहा है कि प्रसार भारती (भारतीय प्रसारण निगम) अधिनियम, 1990 में बना और 1997 में बहुत सी जटिलताओं का सामना करते हुए लागू हुआ। सही बात तो यह है कि प्रसार भारती निगम स्वायत्तशासी है, इसको सर्वाधिकार प्राप्त हैं और सर्वाधिकार प्राप्त होने के कारण अपनी योजनाएं, अपने कार्यक्रम, भारतीय परिवेश में, किस ढंग से सारे प्रसारणों को करना, यह सुनिश्चित कर सकता है, यह इसका स्वंय का अपना अधिकार है और उस अधिकार के अनुकूल अपने काम को आगे बढ़ा सकता है। महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी ने इस संशोधन विधेयक के बारे में दो प्रमुख बातें कही है। मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि एक तो एडमिनिस्ट्रेटिव ढांचा व्यवस्थित हो सके, इसके लिए कुछ सुनिश्चितता स्थापित करनी चाहिए। वह सुनिश्चितता स्थापित करने के लिए आपने दो बातें कही हैं। एक बात तो यह है कि जो अध्यक्ष है, जो चेयरमैन है, इसकी कोई आयु सीमा नहीं है और इसके लिए इसकी आयु सीमा का निर्धारण होना चाहिए और दूसरी बात यह कही है कि इसको और व्यावसायिक बनाने के लिए, इसके लिए अलग से पूर्णकालिक कोई कार्यपालक होना चाहिए और उसके आधार पर आप इस विधेयक को लाये हैं।

महोदय, एनडीए के कार्यकाल में यह विधेयक जब पूर्ण हुआ था, उस वक्त चेयरमैन के नाते, सामान्य तौर पर इस तरह के निगम होते हैं, निगमों में प्रयत्न यह किया जाता है कि जो इसके विशेषज्ञ हो, जो उसके जानकार हों गैर-राजनीतिज्ञ हों, निष्पक्षता के साथ व्यवहार कर सकें, ऐसे लोगों को मनोनीत करना चाहिए। प्रसार भारती निगम के अध्यक्ष के रूप में श्रीमन् कामथ को नियुक्त किया गया था। श्रीमन् कामथ बड़े ही लब्धप्रतिष्ठित, ख्याति प्राप्त पत्रकार हैं, इनके बारे में बताने की आवश्यकता नहीं है, गैर राजनीतिज्ञ हैं, निष्पक्ष हैं और वह निष्पक्षतापूर्वक कार्य कर रहे थे। यह जो संशोधन विधेयक लाया गया है इससे ध्वनित होता है कि अभी उन्होंने 70 की आयु पूर्ण की थी और अगले वर्ष वह अवकाश प्राप्त करने वाले थे। लगता है कि उनको अवकाश प्राप्त के पहले ही मुक्त कर दिया जाये, इस मंशा से यह विधेयक लाया गया लगता है। इसमें आयु सीमा निर्धारित की गयी है, सुनिश्चितता का स्वरूप निर्धारित किया गया है, इसमें हमें कोई आपत्ति नहीं है, लेकिन इस समय जिस तरीके से लाया गया है, निश्चित रूप से इसमें इस प्रकार का पूर्वाग्रह दिखायी पड़ता है।

महोदय, इसी प्रकार से इससे पहले स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय की तरफ से एक संशोधन विधेयक आया था और उसमें एक बड़े लब्धप्रतिष्ठित डाक्टर, चिकित्सक थे पूरे देश में उनका नाम था, उनको हटाने के लिए, डा० वेणु गोपाल को हटाने के लिए इसी प्रकार का विधेयक लाकर हटाया गया। इस प्रकार पूर्व में भी इस प्रकार की घटना घटित हो चुकी है, पूर्व

में सरकार ने इस प्रकार का कृत्य किया है, इसलिए ऐसा लगता है कि यह जो प्रसार भारती (भारतीय प्रसारण निगम) संशोधन विधेयक यहां लाया गया है। यह ठीक है कि माननीय मंत्री जी ने आगामी कॉमलवैल्थ गेम्स के बारे में बात कही है। आगामी अनेक प्रकार की चुनौतियों के बारे में कहा है और यह भी कहा है कि हमें इसको प्राथमिकता के साथ लाना प्रतीत हो रहा था, इसलिए उसके निमित हम इसको लाए हैं। महोदय, इसका कुछ और इंतजार किया जा सकता था और इंतजार करने के बाद जब वे अवकाश प्राप्त होते, तब उनको मुक्ति प्रदान की जाती, तो इसमें कोई हर्ज नहीं था। लेकिन तत्काल इस तरह का विधेयक लाकर, लगता है कि नीयत में किसी प्रकार की खामी है। यह स्पष्ट रूप से झलकता है। यह ठीक है कि इसको व्यवसायिक बनना बहुत आवश्यक है। जो विभिन्न चैनल्स हैं, जिन पर विभिन्न प्रकार की बातें आती रहती हैं, कई बार सदन के अंदर भी इस पर चर्चा हुई है, उनको सुनिश्चित दिशा देने के लिए हम उनको व्यवसायी तो रखें, स्पर्द्धा में भी आगे जाएं, लेकिन उनको एक भारतीयता पर आधारित करें। अभी आपने अपने भाषण में भी कहा कि परंपराओं का ध्यान रखते हुए, भारतीय संस्कृति की रक्षा करते हुए, मूल्यों की सुरक्षा करते हुए दिशा निर्देश करना पड़ेगा। हम व्यवसायिकताओं के आधार पर भी चलें और उस प्रकार के मूल्यों को स्थापित करते हुए, दिशा निर्देश भी करें। यह जो विधेयक लाया गया है, मैं इसको उचित मानता हूं। यह ठीक है, इसमें कोई हर्ज नहीं है, लेकिन जिस तरीके से चेयरमैन की आयु सीमा को अभी इस नाते रखा गया है, जिसमें श्रीमान कामथ जी हट जाएं, इस प्रकार की जो बात की गई, यह उचित नहीं है। इसलिए इस प्रसंग पर मैं यहां इसका विरोध करता हूं, यह उचित नहीं है। धन्यवाद।

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Puducherry): Hon. Deputy Chairman, Sir, at the outset, I thank you for having given me this opportunity to speak on the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008. In order to replace the Ordinance, the hon. Minister has brought this Bill in this august House. Sir, the Objects and Reasons of the Bill have been very clearly mentioned by the hon. Minister.

Now, Sir, my first point is regarding the person who is acting as Chairman and who is a part-timer but his age-limit has not been fixed. The hon. Minister wanted that the age-limit should be there so that it can be regulated. Sir, with regard to the Executive Member, who is a CEO and who has been looking after the entire functioning of the Corporation, the Minister wanted the age to be increased to 65 and the term from three years to five years.

Sir, the Prasar Bharati, especially, the Broadcasting Corporation, has been functioning independently since the UPA came into power. When the BJP regime was there, we all know, they were broadcasting 'India Shining' and they were giving a lot of publicity to their policies and programmes. We have no problem in NDA's giving publicity to its policies and programmes. But the problem was that they were misleading the people. The Prasar Bharati was not functioning as an independent organisation. Sir, the Prasar Bharati came into being to function as an independent entity without being interfered by the Government. That was the object with which it was brought. However, it was used by the NDA Government to serve its own purpose. But when the UPA Government came into position in 2004, the public feature and the independent identity of the Prasar Bharati were ultimately restored.

Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Members for giving importance to Indian customs, values and culture. A lot of importance has been given to these aspects. In addition to this, importance has also been given to other features relating to strengthening the country's unity and integrity and removing the communal feelings among the people of this country whether it is done through feature films or through impartial broadcasting of news, no matter whether it relates to an opposition political party or any other political party. It is broadcast by an impartial judgement. Sir, I was listening with rapt attention to the hon. Member from BJP. He has taken the names of Dr. Venugopal and Shri Kamath. Now, it is the duty of the Opposition to read between the lines.

Sir, in any system of governance, whether it is Government, a corporation or a private entity, there should be an age limit. Supposing a person is appointed Chairman and he continues for a hundred years, the man would go senile; he would not be able to work. We live in a competitive world today and the media, especially the electronic media, is a competitive field. The Doordarshan has got a certain reputation. There is a general perception that Doordarshan does not distort things. The hon. Minister has maintained the identity of Doordarshan. We all know how the private channels are competing with each other with their 'breaking news' and 'de-breaking' news. There is enormous competition. If we wish to improve the quality of the programmes and add more value to the programmes given, then there should be dynamism. If the upper age limit is not fixed and a person is allowed to continue, it would not be proper. Whether it applies to x, y or z is immaterial; it is the question of an institution. In any institution the upper age limit needs to be mantioned. There is an upper age limit in the judiciary and there is an upper age limit in Government service. Even private enterpreneurs are fixing upper age limit for persons to retire them from service. As far as the Prasar Bharati is concerned, the idea with which the hon. Minister has brought this Bill is to limit the age of the person who has crossed the upper age limit of 70 years. This is a laudable objective as people with greater potential can be absorbed. We are not going to leave it with just one amendment in order to axe one gentleman occupying the post.

Then, Sir, coming to the hon. Minister's observation about the Executive Member, more years of service is needed. Two or three years is not sufficient because we will then have to use the corporate house. For a person who is going to occupy the position, a longer period is required to function effectively and efficiently, longer period in the sense, for person who is practically working in the field. Thus, a longer period is required and therefore, five years have been provided for.

Sir, this is a very small Bill with a laudable objective, and there is no politics involved in it. I am in complete agreement with the hon. Minister on one thing that today, in electronic media, in order to compete with the private channels, there is a kind of quality that needs to be maintained. As far as Doordarshan is concerned, it is broadcasting programmes throughout the country in different regional languages and the credit goes to the hon. Minister of the UPA Government. The quality of programmes is improving, whether it is a political, cultural programme or sports programme. Doordarshan and Prasar Bharati are paying more attention towards sports-related programmes. As rightly observed by the hon. Minister, we are about to have the Commonwealth Games and another games in Pune and we need to strengthen the Doordarshan. We need to strengthen Prasar Bharati and there, the hon. Minister's contribution has been enormous.

Sir, if anybody in this august House feels that the Bill has been brought with an ulterior motive, I would like to dissuade that feeling from the minds of the hon. Members. I would only ask them if they could justify one thing. Can a person continue as Chairman for a longer period without an upper age limit? They must convince themselves of that first. Upper age limit should be there for the Chairman of any organisation including Prasar Bharati. This Bill has been brought with that objective. I support the hon. Minister and I want the Bill to be passed unanimously by all the Members of this august House.

SHRI TAPAN KUKAR SEN (West Bengal): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to speak on this Bill. Sir, the hon. Minister has very elaborately explained the objective of this Bill. He talked about imbibing a dynamism in the most important

segment of our society, that is, media which is functioning under Prasar Bharati. Absolutely there is no difference in the perception. It must function dynamically, both to take care of the social objective and, at the same time, to complete with the private channels, which are mushrooming every day. Absolutely there no difference. But sometimes, I think, the chain of logic is going beyond the capacity of imagination of any human being. I think to meet the challenge in the Commonwealth Games that is forthcoming and for that the chairman should go and the present CEO must get an extended life of another three years, it is very difficult to link it together unless it is taken up comprehensively alongwith the entire gamut of manpower management and goverance of Prasar Bharati. Unless it is taken up together, the argument, that this is required to meet the present-day challenge which Prasar Bharati is facing, is very difficult to accept. There is no question of opposing the step that has been taken. Yes, there must be an upper age limit for the chairman. "There must be, at least, five years or three years term', what is the meaning of it? A man, after taking over a position, takes, at least, one year's time to settle down. So, a minimum of five years time, which is a standard in most of the corporate goverance, must be there. Absolutely, there is no question of any opposition. My objection or my critical common observation is on the whole manner in which the matter has been handled. Hon. Minister again, while presenting the Bill, has elaborated the entire story of the Prasar Bharati Act. It has passed through. It has been made effective from 1997. Ordinance after ordinance getting elapsed. It is a 'mess', and from that kind of a situation of 'mess' when the UPA Government has taken over, I think, it should have looked into the issue must more comprehensively in embracing the entire gamut of the issue again. Hon. Minister himself is convinced and he explained all those issues while presenting the Bill. It is a whole status of manpower, which is absolutely hanging in an uncertainly. The hon. Minister is every day facing problems about the status of employees. That is still hanging. Without addressing the basic problem of this manpower, can the Prasar Bharati meet the challenges coming up in the days to come? That is not taken and this is done through the ordinance route. Sorry, please don't misunderstand that. I am not imputing that motive. And if somebody imputes the motive that it is to take care of the incumbent chairman or president or CEO, then the whole institution of Parliament has been involved through this piece of legislation. Is that a right kind of approach? Will it not undermine the status of this great institution?

I think, it is too much of a thing. I think it is overdue. The hon. Minister knows that the matter is already under the consideration. The exercise or the process is going on. At the instance of the hon. Minister, the officials of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry met with the employees, formed a committee, dealt on the issues and they have observed and made recommendations that the Prasar Bharati Act should be amended comprehensively to clearly define the status of the employees working in the Prasar Bharati, AIR and Doordarshan throughout the country. For that, again, a Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, has been constituted and on that decision, hon. Minister has put his stamp while recording his opinion directly. I have gone through all the documents. I fully agree with the content and the matter will be taken up, and the same thing has been echoed by the Minister in this House while piloting the Bill. I think that job is overdue. After passing this Bill, please, don't miss any time. I want an assurance from hon. Minister, in this House, that the whole issue of defining the status of the employees who are working in Prasar Bharati which requies a comprehensive amendment in the Prasar Bharati Act will be taken up at the earliest. Please, bring it in at the earliest possible opportunity. Otherwise, the employees are facing serious problems for getting their retirement

benefits, future, quarter allotment, children's school and education, CGHS facilities, etc. In every matter, they are suffering every day, and, again and again, they are coming to us and they are going to the hon. Minister also. So, that must be kept in mind and a comprehensive Bill to amend the Prasar Bharati Act to take care of the whole issue should be brought.

Another important aspect is there that since the Prasar Bharati was set up, its activities have increased meteroically. As I have been told, I could gather the information that the whole ....*(Time-bell)*. I am just concluding. The area of operation has increased. Responsibility has increased enormously and it requires strengthening of the whole fleet of Prasar Bharati both in the general administration and also in preparing the programmes and doing the main media operation of Prasar Bharati. Definitely, that must also be looked into and proper steps must be taken. I would again say that in the name of professionalism, resorting to any kind of outsourcing mechanism cannot help. The Prasar Bharati is an organisation with the main challenge of meeting the competition and also taking care of the social objectives. So, outsourcing cannot play the role. So, keeping these aspects in view, a comprehensive Bill is required. I request hon. Minister to give these assurances. With these words, I support the Bill and conclude my submission.

SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I will have a brief intervention. I welcome the Bill. At, at the same time, Sir, I would like to express my views about fixing of the upper age limit. Sir, the Prasar Bharati Bill was orginally brought with an idea to give total autonomy to the broadcasting and telecasting. Sir, at the same time, now the concerned Ministry is fixing the upper age limit. I do not think that this is a wise idea because for certain areas, we require experts and they cannot be measured in terms of age. For instance, we have the Metro rail and we have experts to manage that. We do not see such age limits there This upper age limit may be relaxed and suitable amendment should be brought for this purpose. In suitable cases, there need not be any upper age limit. But, fixing the term to three years or five years is acceptable. Apart from this, I would like to make another suggestion. The Doordarshan, of course, reaches to the maximum popultion in this country. It has got its transmitters all over the places where even the private channels cannot reach. The Doordarshan viewership is very high. But, there is not sufficient encouragement for some of the regional languages or some of the languages which are spoken by very few minorities. For instance, Saurashtra is one of the languages, which is spoken at Maduari in Tamil Nadu. There is a large group of people who speak Saurashtra language but there is no way of developing their language. There is a *Doordarshan Kendra* at Madurai but it is not a full-fledged *Kendra* There are some other languages, which are spoken by the linguistic minorities in some parts of Tamil Nadu, like Telugu and Kannada. Those languages must also be encouraged through the Doordarshan. With these words, I support the Bill Thank you.

SHRI TARLOCHAN SINGH (Haryana): Sir, I fully appreciate the move of the hon. Minister. All of us should support such efforts for improvement of Prasar Bharati because Doordarshan and All-India Radio are the prestige of the country. There is already enough competition from the private channels. We all praise BBC, CNN, and, all of us also want that the level of our Doordarshan and All-India Radio should go up to that standard. Sir, I think that the age limit of 70 years should not be prescribed. In the United States, even for the Judges of the Supreme Court, there is no age limit. It should be left to the discretion of the Government. If you find expert people above this age, those people should be taken in because our efforts should be to get maximum number of experts, for which age should not

be a bar. We should see to that both Doordarshan and All-India Radio provide better service.

Sir, I have a few suggestions to make. It was the Asian Games that brought colour television in India in 1982. Earlier, there was no colour television. The Asian Games also brought so much expertise at that time. Luckily, Sir, the present Minister is also one of the senior-most person in the sports fraternity, and, all his efforts to promote sports are there. Sir, time has come when we should devote these two years in popularising all the games in the country. We should make small films and show them in the villages also so that people should become aware of the sports. We do maximum for cricket but by doing that much, we are killing other games. So, we should devote more time for encouraging sports in villages and rural areas and this will be a big service by the Doordarshan and All-India Radio to popularise the games. Sir, now we should also try to create an expert panel of broadcasters and of all those who are there for various games. Those experts should be finalised now.

Sir, this is the year when all over the world people will commemorate passing away of Guru Gobind Singhji and installationof Guru Granth Sahib. Sir, I remember, in 1962, when Chinese attacked India, at that time, the entire All-India Radio was turned to the verses of Guru Gobind Singh. Day in, day out, Guru Gobind Singh was quoted on the radio to enthuse people for all our efforts to defend India. That time was fully utilised, and, everywhere in all languages, *bani* of Guru Gobind Singh was being played so that people could know how we can go ahead. This is the time when there is a need for communal harmony and unity, and, Guru Granth Sahib is the only holy book in the world, which has message for all religions. So, I request the hon. Minister to have a special programme on Guru Granth Sahib in all languages this year, which should be aired by all channels and a special film should also be made.

Secondly, Sir, even now, all over the world, the Sikh community is facing a problem. At times, people who are not aware, mistake us as Talibani, Iranian or so. Why does not the Government come out with a special film on Sikhs? And the Sikh should be highlighted in many roles, so that people around the world should not have any misconception about our identity.

Sir, the last point I want to make with your permissioon is about the language. All of us are aware that three-fourths of Pakistan is Punjabi-speaking. Across the border, they speak Punjabi. But we have no programme in Punjabi which can be attractive in Pakistan. You are beaming all other programmes. Perhaps you are not aware that in spite of the best efforts of Pakistan Government. Urdu could not take the place of Punjabi in Pakistan. Even now the Government of Pakistan has reverted back and they are now doing all programmes in Punjabi. My request to the Minister is that the Punjabi language programme should be beamed more from Delhi and Jalandhar and from Jammu and Srinagar because the whole of Pakistan, even Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Haryana and Himachal, all are Punjabi-speaking areas. So, Punjabi language should be fully taken into consideration and more programmes should be beamed which will benefit us.

With these words, I support the Bill brought by the hon. Minister. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chairman has permitted the hon. External Affairs Minister to make a statement.